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ABSTRACT

This policy and position document was prepared for the Michigan Department of Education with the purpose of assisting local education agencies in taking the necessary steps to strengthen guidance and counseling programs and practices in order to enhance learning. The document states that although program options may vary within the state, quality programming presents a common set of expectations for guidance and counseling programs and includes implications for counselor roles and functions. Nine elements of these quality programs are listed. The definition of the guidance and counseling role in the Michigan General School Laws is provided. The policy of the State Board of Education that educational institutions address the individual and group needs of all students by providing a comprehensive guidance and counseling program is stated. Specific areas that all educational institutions are expected by the State Board to make provisions for, such as services for special populations, are discussed. Twenty-one recommendations for action at the state, intermediate, and local levels are provided. (ABL)

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POLICY AND POSITION PAPER ON COMPREHENSIVE GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAMS

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

As a consequence of State and national reports on the status of education made public in the early 1980's, Michigan citizens have become much more concerned about the quality of education and the need for reform in the educational system. Reports such as, "A Nation at Risk: Imperative for Educational Reform" (1983), "Better Education for Michigan Citizens: A Blueprint for Action" (1984), and the State Board of Education Goals for 1985-86, emphasize the need to raise academic standards and student performance. These reports recommend revising curricula, updating instructional techniques, using modern technology, improving software, and strengthening the commitment of students, teachers, staff, and parents to the attainment of higher academic achievement.

In the push for academic excellence, it is essential to remember that schools cannot deal with improved academic achievement without consideration for the students' self-concepts, personal goals, and values. While it is true that guidance is a shared responsibility of the home, community and school, the school has the major responsibility of providing professional guidance and counseling for students.

The purpose of this policy and position paper is to affirm the State Board of Education's commitment to provide support, resources, and the assistance necessary to develop and implement quality, comprehensive guidance and counseling programs in the schools throughout the State.

On February 3, 1987 the Michigan State Board of Education approved this policy and position paper under the leadership of Phillip E. Runkel, State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Special appreciation is extended to those who participated in the development of this policy and position paper, and to those organizations and individuals who reviewed, critiqued and offered recommendations for its improvement.

Gary D. Hawks
Interim Superintendent of
Public Instruction

BACKGROUND STATEMENT

In seeking to attain excellence in education as outlined in the Michigan Board of Education Plan, "Better Education for Michigan Citizens: A Blueprint For Action", (1984), Superintendent Phillip E. Runkel directed the staff of the Department of Education to assist local education agencies in taking the necessary steps to strengthen guidance and counseling programs and practices in order to enhance learning.

The Superintendent's Study Committee on Guidance and Counseling met for the first time on February 21, 1986, and subsequently met several times as a body and in small groups to develop a policy and position paper. A first draft was presented to major educational organizations of the State for their recommendations. This document contains the position of the State Board and the State Superintendent in terms of their commitment to the role that guidance and counseling must play in implementing the Board's "Blueprint For Action."

During the early stages of this developmental process, the following agreement was reached on concepts and circumstances which served as a basis of the Study Committee's deliberations:

> **Social, economic, industrial and technological change during the present century, and projections for even greater change in the twenty-first century, are reflected in the expectations that Michigan citizens have for their educational system. Thus, educators and policy makers at all levels are challenged to offer those academic, vocational-technical and guidance and counseling programs that prepare children, youth and adults for current and future life roles. The State Board of Education's "Policy and Position Paper on Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Programs" was developed to reinforce a common core of expectations and to formulate such language as is necessary to assist in statewide realization of quality programs. That common core of expectations is found in the Michigan School Code, Michigan K-12 Program Standards of Quality and Standards of Quality for Michigan Adult Education.**

A variety of excellent program models exist throughout the State and nation that provide for comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. However, in Michigan, intermediate and local school districts and postsecondary institutions must accept responsibility for determining their guidance and counseling needs and for designing suitable programs that will provide opportunities appropriate for students in each setting. Although program options may vary within the State, quality programming presents a common set of expectations for guidance and counseling

programs and includes implications for counselor roles and functions. It reinforces the position that the elements of a quality, comprehensive guidance and counseling program are:

1. Well-defined counselor roles, functions and responsibilities, as well as guidance roles and responsibilities for teachers, administrators and support service personnel.

2. Clearly stated guidance and counseling content, services and activities as an integral part of educational programming at all levels, K through postsecondary, including career, vocational-technical, adult and continuing education.

3. Clearly written program goals and objectives that promote the provision of appropriate quality services for all populations of the educational agency.

4. Local guidance and counseling program plans that specify content, activities and student outcomes consistent with the philosophy, unique characteristics, educational objectives for the respective local education agency and the needs of the students served.

5. Procedures for periodic assessment and evaluation of the existing guidance and counseling programs to determine the degree to which student and program outcomes are attained in order to update program plans and make them more effective.

6. Activities and experiences that promote student learning outcomes by addressing student needs for self-understanding, self-esteem, motivation, growth and development, career awareness, exploration and decision-making needed in the formulation of their career and educational development plans.

7. Appropriate and adequate counselor/student ratios at all levels--elementary, middle, junior high, high school and postsecondary--in order to attain program goals, objectives and outcomes.

8. A guidance team approach that includes counselors, teachers, administrators and support staff working together to implement the guidance and counseling program.

9. Opportunities for expanded and continuous personal and professional growth for all members of the guidance team, including preservice and inservice training for teachers, administrators and support personnel relative to their role and responsibilities in guidance and counseling.

DEFINITION

The State of Michigan General School Laws, Michigan Administrative Code, R390.1301(c) defines the guidance and counseling role as: "...specialized activities performed by an individual when assisting students to identify, plan and attain those goals consistent with their aptitudes, needs, abilities and interests; coordinating and integrating services directly related to students' mental, physical, social and emotional well being; and consulting with parents, teachers and other specialists regarding pupil growth, learning and development."

POLICY

It is the policy of the Michigan State Board of Education that educational institutions at all levels and all program areas-including academic, career, vocational-technical, adult and continuing education-should address the individual and group needs of all students by providing a comprehensive guidance and counseling program. These comprehensive guidance and counseling programs should operate without bias on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, age, sex, marital status or handicapping conditions. They shall be accessible to all segments of the population.

POSITION OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The State Board of Education believes that a quality, comprehensive guidance and counseling program is an integral part of the total education program and that all Michigan students deserve the opportunity to participate in a program that is responsive to their personal, social, physical, emotional, academic and career needs through a developmental approach. The State Board of Education encourages local educational agencies to develop and implement comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. It is the responsibility of the intermediate and local school districts and postsecondary institutions to plan and implement guidance and counseling programs that reflect the philosophy and unique characteristics of the educational agency and respond to the needs of the students they serve. Comprehensive programming should include, but not necessarily be limited to, provisions for:

1. Adoption/approval, by the local board, of guidance and counseling program goals and measurable student objectives.

2. Dissemination of information for implementation and evaluation of local guidance and counseling goals and measurable objectives.

3. Agreement on and communication of well-defined counselor roles that support guidance and counseling programs that respond to the needs of students.

4. Articulation between elementary, middle, secondary, postsecondary, community, vocational-technical and special education programming.

5. Development and implementation of services and activities that are responsive to the unique needs of special populations.[1]

6. Maintenance of adequate counselor/student ratios for development and implementation of quality guidance and counseling programs.

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[1] Special populations are those individuals or groups who meet local, State and federal criteria for receiving additional services/activities to enhance their potential for success.

7. Coordination that maximizes use of home, school, community and private sector resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The State Board of Education encourages cooperation at the State, intermediate, and local levels for the purpose of developing and maintaining quality, comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. Thus, the State Board of Education recommends that each educational agency provide a comprehensive guidance and counseling program that includes a variety of experiences that prepare students to function effectively in their life-career roles. The State Board of Education establishes the following recommendations as guides for action at the State, intermediate and local levels:

Michigan State Board/Department of Education

1. Adopt the State Plan and Implementation Guidelines for the development and improvement of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs at all levels.

2. Make technical assistance available to local and intermediate districts, postsecondary institutions and organizations in the improvement of programs.

3. Provide full-time guidance and counseling staff and maintain a staffing structure that provides assistance in the implementation of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs at all levels.

4. Develop and maintain collaborative efforts with national, State and local professional and parental organizations for the purpose of maximizing resources.

5. Promote the importance of elementary school counselors and school staff in the implementation of district-wide comprehensive guidance and counseling programs.

6. Maintain a database that will allow the Michigan Department of Education to assist local educational agencies in the determination of effectiveness for program improvement.

7. Identify strategies for improving the quality of guidance and counseling programs through input from a Superintendent's Referent Committee on guidance and counseling for the purpose of developing a state plan and implementation guidelines. This committee shall meet periodically for the purpose of assisting the State Board.

8. Provide ongoing opportunities for the professional development of staff and members of the guidance team at the local level.

9. Conduct an initial review of the current counselor education programs and plan for periodic follow-up reviews that enable the Department to provide technical assistance for the purpose of improving guidance and counseling training programs.

10. Conduct a review of the counselor endorsement rules in the Michigan General School Laws for counselors that recommends upgrading educational requirements, role statements and legal prohibitions.

Intermediate School Districts

1. The intermediate school district should assign or maintain adequate personnel to provide leadership related to guidance and counseling programs. This leadership should provide inservice materials, assistance in the development and implementation of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs, and provide direction to local schools in the development and maintenance of agreements within the community to improve guidance and counseling services and activities. This leadership should also facilitate articulation among elementary, middle, secondary and postsecondary guidance and counseling programs within the service area.

2. The intermediate school district should support the Department's policies and undertake activities to assist local districts in maintaining quality, comprehensive guidance and counseling programs.

3. The intermediate school district should provide professional development programs for guidance and counseling personnel within the service area. Wherever possible, the intermediate school district should

collaborate with professional and parental organizations, other educational agencies and non educational agencies to enhance programs

Local Education Agencies

1. Each local administration should assign a high priority to the implementation of comprehensive guidance and counseling progams. This should include transitions into the world of work, as well as transitions at all levels, including postsecondary.

2. A written K-12 guidance and counseling program plan should be developed in every district with input from professional staff, parents, students, community persons and representatives of business and industry. This plan should include program goals, measurable objectives and the means for disseminating and evaluating the guidance and counseling program.

3. Each local administration should adopt a role and function policy that is compatible with the State Board's position and that is reflective of policies of professional organizations.

4. The district should provide full-time guidance and counseling personnel at all levels, including elementary, with appropriate counselor-student ratios, consistent with the recommendations of the American School Counselor Association.[2]

Postsecondary Institutions

1. Postsecondary institutions should assign a high priority to guidance and counseling programs including, but not limited to, such areas as admissions, financial aid, testing, placement, counseling and career guidance.

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[2]**ASCA Counselor,** GOVERNING BOARD MEETS, March 1983, page 9, which established guidelines of:

"Elementary Level - 1 Counselor to 300-400
Middle/Junior High - 1 Counselor to 250-350
High School - 1 Counselor to 200-300
Postsecondary - 1 Counselor to 250-350 (2-Year Colleges)
Fulltime equivalent students pursuing degree and certificate programs;

and are offered as standards appropriate to be sought by school districts."

2. Postsecondary institutions should employ guidance and counseling personnel with appropriate credentials, and should provide for an adequate counselor-student ratio in order to establish and maintain comprehensive guidance and counseling services.

3. Postsecondary institutions should collaborate with K-12 institutions to improve guidance and counseling services at all levels and to facilitate the access of all potential college-bound students to those services and activities needed for postsecondary preparation.

4. Postsecondary institutions should develop procedures and activities that enhance articulation among colleges and universities. Articulation activities should include provisions for sharing appropriate information and services among postsecondary, secondary, middle and elementary guidance programs.

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MICHIGAN STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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